



Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Parkade Center, Suite 250, 601 Business Loop 70 West  
Columbia, Missouri 65203

September 14, 2004

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE HANDBOOK (NECH)  
190-vi-NECH  
Amendment MO-2

SUBJECT: ECS – Environmental Evaluation for Conservation Planning  
(NRCS-MOCPA-52)

Purpose: To provide instructions on replacing form NRCS-MOCPA-52, dated 4-04 with NRCS- MOCPA-52, dated 9-04.

Effective Date: This information is effective upon receipt.

Explanation: This form has been revised. Separate columns for “Existing Condition” and “No Action” have been added and Cultural Resources in Section J “Special Environmental Concerns” has been modified to improve evaluation procedures.

Filing Instructions: (This is an electronic handbook)

***Posted***

Changes have been posted on the Missouri NRCS web site under Technical Resources/Technical References/National Environmental Compliance Handbook.

***Removed***

Pages MO610-E-70.1-5, MO Amend, April 2004.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Roger A. Hansen".

ROGER A. HANSEN  
State Conservationist

DIST: O

## **MO610.11 Framework for Compliance**

### **Requirements**

#### **Field Offices**

Missouri NRCS field offices will conduct an Environmental Evaluation to determine the potential of alternative solutions to resource problems for all planning activities and document the results of the evaluation on from NRCS-MOCPA-25, “Environmental Evaluation Worksheet” (Exhibit MO610.70).

U.S. Department of Agriculture      NRCS-MOCPA-52 Natural Resources Conservation Service    09-04  <b>Environmental Evaluation Worksheet</b>		<b>A. Client:</b>				
		<b>B. Plan ID Number or Farm Number:</b>				
		<b>C. Tract/Fields:</b>				
		<b>D. Client's objective</b>		<b>E. Purpose and need for action</b>		
<b>Purpose:</b> This form documents existing resource concerns and conditions and summarizes the effects and impacts of proposed conservation systems and activities on natural, human and cultural resources.						
<b>Instructions:</b> This form will be completed for all planning activities on a conservation treatment unit. Document <u>Existing Condition</u> resource concerns and considerations (listed in Section F) that are present, in Sections H, I, K. If a section or category does not apply, place a "N/A". <u>No Action</u> documents the effects of no change in current operations on the existing resource concerns. Under <u>Proposed Action</u> and <u>Alternative Action</u> , (Sections H, I, K) note whether the proposed conservation activity will have a positive or negative impact or N/A on existing resource concerns. Use <u>Comments</u> section or an attachment to expand discussions on impacts, actions and activities.						
<b>F. Resource Considerations or Concerns</b>	<b>H. Effects (Attach additional pages as necessary)</b>					
	Existing Condition	No Action	Proposed Action	Alternative Action	Comments	
<b>SOIL</b>						
erosion						
condition						
deposition						
<b>WATER</b>						
quantity						
quality						
<b>AIR</b>						
quality						
<b>PLANT</b>						
suitability						
condition						
<b>ANIMAL</b>						
Fish and Wildlife						
Domestic						

<b>G. Economic and Social Considerations</b>	<b>I. Effects</b>				
	Existing Condition	No Action	Proposed Action	Alternative Action	Comments
Capital					
Labor					
Management level					
Profitability					
Risk					

**MO610.70 Environmental Evaluation Worksheet**
**National Environmental Compliance Handbook**

J. Special Environmental Concerns: (See National Environmental Compliance Handbook, Evaluation Procedure Guide Sheets for further guidance)	K. Effects				
	Existing Concerns	No Action	Proposed Action	Alternative Action	Comments
Clean Water Act/Waters of the U.S .					
Cultural Resources			No <input type="checkbox"/> * Yes <input type="checkbox"/> *	No <input type="checkbox"/> * Yes <input type="checkbox"/> *	
Threatened and Endangered Species ^					
Environmental Justice					
Fish and Wildlife Coordination ^					
Floodplain Management					
Migratory Birds					
Natural Areas					
Prime and Unique Farmlands					
Riparian Area					
Scenic Beauty					
Wetlands ^					
Wild and Scenic Rivers ^					

^ These items may require consultation or coordination between the lead agency and another governmental unit.

\* Do the planned actions include an undertaking (practices that may damage cultural resources)? (See eFOTG, Section II, Cultural Resource Information for a Missouri listing) If yes, fill out Missouri Cultural Resource Worksheet, MO-CR-1.

L. Easements, permissions, or permits. \_\_\_\_\_

M. Mitigation \_\_\_\_\_

N. The information recorded on this sheet is based on the best available information:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Title Date

O. Agencies, persons, and references consulted

**P. Findings.**

I have considered the effects of this action and the alternatives on the Resource, Economic, and Social Considerations; the Special Environmental Concerns; and the extraordinary circumstances criteria in the instructions for form NRCS-MOCPA-52. I find, for the reasons stated in (Q) below, that the proposed action:

\_\_\_\_\_ is **not a federal action**. No additional environmental analysis is required.

\_\_\_\_\_ is **categorically excluded** from further environmental analysis and there are no extraordinary circumstances. No additional analysis is required.

\_\_\_\_\_ has been **sufficiently analyzed** in an existing NRCS environmental document. No additional analysis is required.

\_\_\_\_\_ May require **preparation of an EA or EIS**. The action will be referred to the State Office.

Q. Rationale supporting the finding \_\_\_\_\_

R. \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Title Date

**Instructions for Completing Form NRCS-MOCPA-52, "Environmental Evaluation Worksheet"****COMPLETING THE FORM**

The form NRCS-MOCPA-52 is the instrument used to summarize the effects of conservation practices and systems. *It is NRCS policy to conduct an environmental evaluation as a part of every planning activity.* It also provides summary documentation of the environmental evaluation (EE) of the planned actions. The EE is “a concurrent part of the planning process in which the potential long-term and short-term impacts of an action on people, their physical surroundings, and nature are evaluated and alternative actions explored” (NPPH 2003). The EE applies to all assistance provided by NRCS (GM190 Part 410.5).

The following are instructions for completing form NRCS-CPA-52:

- A Record the client's name.
- B Enter the conservation plan identification number.
- C Enter the conservation management unit to which this evaluation applies. This may be done by field, pasture, tract, land use (i.e. cropland, rangeland, woodland etc.), by resource area (i.e. riparian corridor or wetland area) or any other suitable geographic division.
- D Briefly summarize the client’s objective(s).
- E Briefly identify the purpose and need for action.
- F, G Use the provided resource, economic, and social considerations identified during scoping or by any existing area-wide, watershed or other resource document appropriate for the planning area. The list of considerations may be expanded by listing subcategories, such as wind erosion, sheet erosion, gully erosion etc. Refer to the applicable quality criteria in Section III, eFOTG.
- H, I Document existing conditions and the effects of no action , the proposed action, and any alternative action for the considerations listed in “E and F”. Reference applicable quality criteria, information in the CPPE, and quantify effects whenever possible. Consider both long-term and short-term effects. Consider any effects which may be individually minor but cumulatively significant at a larger scale or over an extended time period.
- J, K See the Special Environmental Concerns Evaluation Procedure Guide Sheets for further guidance. Completion of Help Sheets is not required, but may provide additional documentation that the appropriate processes have been followed. Complete Section “J” by documenting the effects of the proposed action on the special environmental concerns listed in “I”. Quantify effects whenever necessary. Consider both long-term and short-term effects. Consider any effects, which may be individually minor but cumulatively significant at a larger scale or over an extended time period.
- L List any necessary easements, permissions, or permits (i.e. 404, ESA Section 10, State or County permits or requirements).
- M Describe the mitigation to be applied that will offset any adverse impacts.

- N The individual completing the MOCPA-52 must sign and date the form indicating they have used the best available information. This signature is particularly important when a TSP is completing the MOCPA-52 or when NRCS is providing technical assistance on behalf of another agency.
- O Document contact and communications with USFWS, NOAA Fisheries, COE, EPA, NRCS State Specialists, State Environmental Agencies, or any others consulted. Include public participation activities, if applicable.
- P Check the applicable finding being made. There is **no federal action** when NRCS makes HEL or wetland conservation determinations or provides technical design or planning assistance where there is no Federal financial assistance.
- Q Explain the reasons for making the finding identified in P. Cite any references, analysis, data, or documents which support the finding. Add additional pages as necessary. To find that an action has been sufficiently analyzed in an existing NRCS environmental document, the document must cover the area in which the action is being implemented.
- R NRCS responsible official must sign and date for NRCS actions. The FSA or other federal agency responsible official must sign and date for FSA or other agency funded activities.

## CRITERIA FOR IDENTIFYING EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES

Extraordinary circumstances usually involve impacts on environmental concerns such as wetlands, floodplains, or cultural resources. The circumstances that may lead to a determination of extraordinary circumstances are the same factors used to make determinations of significance and include

1. Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse and that significantly affect the quality of the human environment.
2. The degree to which the proposed action affects public health or safety.
3. Unique characteristics of the area, such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.
4. The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be controversial.
5. The degree to which the possible effects on the quality of the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.
6. The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represent a decision in principle about a future consideration.
7. Individually insignificant but cumulatively significant activities that have not been analyzed on a broader level, such as on a program-wide or priority area basis.
8. Adverse effects on areas listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, or that may result in loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.
9. Adverse effects on an endangered or threatened species or its designated critical habitat.
10. Circumstances threatening the violation of Federal, State or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.

If one or more extraordinary circumstances are found to apply to the proposed action, determine whether the proposal can be modified to mitigate the adverse effects and prevent the extraordinary circumstances. If this can be done and the client agrees to the change, then the proposed action may be modified and

categorically excluded. If the proposed action cannot be modified or the client refuses to accept a proposed change, prepare an EA or EIS as indicated above.

If none of the extraordinary circumstances are determined to apply to the proposed action (or modified action), then it may be categorically excluded. Document the rationale for the determination in Q.